

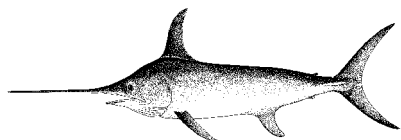
North Atlantic swordfish are overfished but appear to be recovering as a result of recent international conservation and management measures. It is now more important than ever to protect small swordfish in order to rebuild the population.

The United States has agreed to an international rebuilding program and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has implemented measures to rebuild North Atlantic swordfish. The rebuilding program includes a lower quota and dead discard allowance whereby fish released dead will be counted against the U.S. quota.

NMFS regulates the swordfish fishery under the authority of the following two laws:

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act: Calls for the use of the precautionary approach in fisheries management to end overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks.

Atlantic Tunas Convention Act: Requires NMFS to implement the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (includes swordfish).



Minimum Size Limit

47 inches lower jaw fork length
(straight measurement, not curved over the body)

Size limit applies to U.S. citizens and U.S.-flagged vessels throughout Atlantic Ocean and adjacent waters. Fish must be kept in whole or dressed form through landing. "Dressed" indicates a headed/gutted fish with some or all fins removed. Fishermen may not possess pieces of swordfish while aboard fishing vessels. There is no retention of swordfish in the South Atlantic, except by vessels fishing with longline gear.

No Sale by "Recreational" Fishermen

Fishermen are not permitted to sell, barter, or trade Atlantic swordfish or swordfish pieces without possessing a valid commercial swordfish permit. Because the commercial fishery is limited access, you cannot obtain a new permit from NMFS; NMFS does, however, process transfers. There is no bag limit for recreational fishermen.

Tournament Registration

Any person responsible for maintaining records of participants and results used for awarding tournament points or prizes for Atlantic highly migratory species must register the tournament with NMFS at least four weeks prior to commencement. If you are selected for reporting, NMFS will send you a reporting form that must be returned to NMFS within 7 days after tournament fishing has been completed. *For more information, contact www.nmfspermits.com/TournamentInstructions.asp.*

Swordfish Quotas

Quotas for 2000-2002 include all landed swordfish and those released dead during the fishing year (e.g., June 1, 2000-May 31, 2001). Swordfish landed by recreational fishermen are counted against the swordfish quota. Once that quota is taken, all swordfish caught by recreational fishermen must be released. *For information regarding landings and quotas, call 1-800-894-5528.*

Future Plans

Tagging Program NMFS is considering options to monitor billfish and recreational swordfish landings. Among those options is the possibility of prohibiting possession of swordfish or billfish unless a tag is affixed to the fish when the fish is boated. Fishermen would need to report all landings. *To provide comments on this issue to NMFS or for more information, contact Buck Sutter or Jill Stevenson at 727-570-5447.*

Permits/Logbooks for Charter/Headboats

Charterboats and headboats targeting HMS species, including Atlantic swordfish, will soon be required to obtain a permit. Permitted vessels may be selected for catch and effort reporting. If you are selected for reporting, NMFS will send you a report to be returned following completion of your trip. *For more information, contact Brad McHale at 978-281-9260.*

General Information

HMS Division fax network: Provides updates on management actions. If your organization would like to be a member of our fax network, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347.

HMS Advisory Panel meetings: These meetings provide an avenue for input on upcoming issues. Check our webpage for upcoming events.

Check out the HMS Webpage...

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html

Tuna Issues

1-888-872-8862

(24 hr. recording of regulations, etc.)

Mark Murray-Brown, Pat Scida, Brad McHale
Gloucester, MA
978-281-9260

Shark Issues

Margo Schulze-Haugen/Karyl Brewster-Geisz
Silver Spring, MD
301-713-2347

Swordfish/Billfish/VMS Issues

Jill Stevenson/Buck Sutter
Southeast Regional Office
St. Petersburg, FL
727-570-5447

For further 24 hr. recorded information about HMS
actions, call the HMS Infoline: 1-800-894-5528

Law Enforcement Issues

East Coast of Florida: 407-269-0004
Mid-Atlantic: 732-528-3315
Northeast: 508-994-7350
Gulf of Mexico: 956-423-3450

To report a violation of fishery regulations:
1-800-286-1116

Related websites

Fishing permits: www.nmfspermits.com

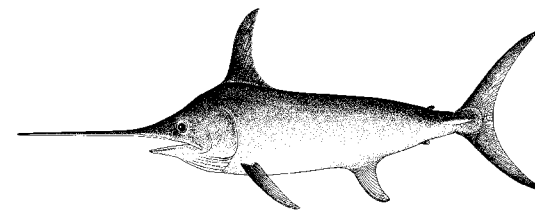
Recreational fishing statistics:
www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/

NOAA Weather: www.nws.noaa.gov/om

Safety regulations: www.uscgboating.org

National Marine Fisheries Service
Highly Migratory Species Division
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Federal Swordfish Regulations for Recreational Fishermen



**Highly Migratory Species Division
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service**

This pamphlet was prepared in October 2000 to provide a summary of swordfish regulations from the HMS Fishery Management Plan. A copy of complete fishery regulations that apply to recreational fishermen may be obtained by calling the Highly Migratory Species Division at 727-570-5447. Since fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize themselves with the latest complete regulations and are responsible for complying with current official regulations.

